



U.S. Immigration  
and Customs  
Enforcement

February 8, 2006

# News Release

**ICE COMMENTS ON HUSBAND, WIFE CONVICTION  
FOR VISA FRAUD, ENCOURAGING ALIENS TO ILLEGALLY ENTER U.S.**  
*The couple filed fictitious petitions and encouraged Chinese nationals to enter U.S. illegally*

HOUSTON, Texas — In response to today's conviction of a husband and wife for visa fraud and for encouraging aliens to enter the United States illegally announced by the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Southern District of Texas, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) issued the following statement:

"Individuals who choose to defraud the government by filing fictitious petitions are violating the immigration laws in this country," said Robert Rutt, ICE Houston special agent-in-charge.

ICE encourages the public to report any suspicious activity, through its toll-free hotline at 1-866-DHS-2ICE. This hotline is staffed around the clock by investigators.

#ICE#

*U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of four integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.*



**U. S. Department of Justice  
U. S. Attorney's Office  
Southern District of Texas**  
*Chuck Rosenberg • United States Attorney*

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

DATE: February 8, 2006

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**HUSBAND AND WIFE CONVICTED OF CONSPIRACY TO  
COMMIT VISA FRAUD AND ENCOURAGING ALIENS TO ENTER THE U.S. ILLEGALLY**

(HOUSTON, TX) United States Attorney Chuck Rosenberg announced today that Kenneth Cohen, 64, of Houston, pleaded guilty to conspiring with his wife, Ping Lee Cohen, 54, also from Houston, to encourage unlawful immigration of Chinese nationals through a scheme to file fraudulent visa applications with Immigration and Customs Enforcement. He faces up to five years imprisonment and a fine up to \$250,000 when sentenced on May 11, 2006.

Cohen appeared before United States District Judge David Hittner this morning and admitted his participation in the conspiracy that took place between April 2000 and October 2005. Cohen, together with his wife, Ping Lee Cohen, were in contact with Chinese citizens who paid up to \$120,000 to enter the United States and ultimately obtain citizenship. Each participated in a scheme in which Ping Lee Cohen and Kenneth Cohen would recruit the owners of small U.S. companies to make offers of employment to Chinese citizens which allowed them to obtain employment-based visas enabling them to enter and remain in the U.S. on a business visa. The defendants then created an illusory relationship between Chinese companies and U.S. companies by submitting forged stock certificates, stock transfer ledgers and financial records in support of petitions to the former Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), which were then filed with the Immigration Service on behalf of their clients. The Cohens would then utilize a local law office to petition the Immigration Service for the Chinese citizen to enter and remain in the U.S. as an executive level employee of the various U.S. businesses. A co-conspirator, who is pending trial, was employed by that law office and is alleged to have conspired with the Cohens in this scheme.

The affected U.S. business owners confirmed that these supporting documents had been forged, that they had never employed the Chinese citizens, and that their companies were never wholly or partially owned by the Chinese companies as required to obtain this class of visa.

Ping Lee Cohen, who pleaded guilty on February 3, 2006, to conspiracy to commit visa fraud and to encourage unlawful immigration, faces up to five years imprisonment and fines up \$250,000 when sentenced on May 5, 2006.

Special Agents of the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement conducted the investigation and the case is being prosecuted by the Assistant United States Attorney Doug Davis.

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